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ABSTRACT

In response to the expressed need for cooperation between the academic and business sectors, Miami-Dade Community College established a Center for Business and Industry at the College's Mitchell Wolfson Campus in the Miami business district to centralize college programs, marketing, and other ties with the local business community. This arrangement was designed to facilitate the customizing of course content and scheduling for field-specific on-campus or on-site training at the request of local businesses. The center's executive director, who reports to the dean of instruction, has a staff consisting of a director of training, director of conferences, management consultant, and two secretaries. Institutes are offered in accounting, architecture and engineering, banking and finance, computer technology, corporate fitness, foreign trade, hospitality management, insurance, international/intercultural affairs, language communication, law, management and supervision, marketing and sales, office technology, science technology, and small business development. These institutes serve both small and large businesses and provide liaisons with campus departments through campus faculty. Available programs include courses, professional seminars, conferences, and workshops in cooperation with professional associations. Plans include expansion of services to the Caribbean Basin. Three tables display the program offerings. (MSE)

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MIAMI-DADE COMMUNITY COLLEGE: AN ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSE TO THE LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION NEEDS OF BUSINESS AND THE PROFESSIONS

By

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Miami-Dade Community College: An Organizational Response to the Language and Communication Needs of Business and the Professions

In recent years, members of the academic and business sectors have become increasingly aware of the need for a closer partnership. The changing conditions of today's business environment demand that educational institutions be more flexible and responsive to the specific needs of business and industry. The benefits of such a partnership are apparent. While industry can provide valuable sources of information on changing skill requirements and specific business trends, the colleges can provide training and other services to enhance or educate the workforce in a more cost effective manner than by corporate in-house training.

In 1982, the American Council on Education conducted a survey whose results indicated that many colleges and universities had established working relationships with industry. There were more programs between education and industry during 1981 than in the total of the previous five years. The primary types of these cooperative arrangements have generally included employee education and training, use of personnel, use of facilities, research and development and cooperative education (Huddleston and Fenwick 96-100). Such a dramatic increase in collaborative efforts should prompt more educational institutions to examine ties with business and to investigate the possibility of renewing or strengthening those ties.

Miami-Dade Community College has addressed this rising need to establish a working partnership between the academic and the business sectors. In August

of 1983, the College established the Center for Business and Industry (CBI) at its Mitchell Wolfson Campus in order to more successfully meet the expressed needs of the business and industrial community of South Florida. Original funding for the CBI was provided by the Board of Trustees of the College in order to establish a Center for Excellence. The CBI was created as the Campus's response to this request. The purpose of this paper will be to outline the organizational structure and function of the CBI. Particular programs and offerings will also be highlighted.

In canvassing area businesses, College officials soon became aware that in order to establish positive ties with and offer appropriate services to the professional community, marketing efforts would have to be centralized and upgraded. Program offerings would also have to be expanded. Because of the considerable size of the College and the danger of some duplication by equivalent or similar departments on all four campuses, there was concern over the fact that area businesses were being approached by too many people and too haphazardly. As a result, a more focused and centralized effort was necessary in order to target and attract area businesses. The image that the College presents to the business and professional community should be consistently favorable. Therefore, it was determined that business professionals would be contacted by, become familiar with and conduct business with only one unit of the College, the Center for Business and Industry.

Because of the volatile and changing nature of the business arena, professional firms, large or small, require customized field-specific training and programs. Academic institutions frequently cannot fulfill these demands for a variety of reasons. Traditional curricula offerings and school and departmental structures have some inherent limitations that impede academic institutions from providing offerings in either the subject matter or the time frame requested.

Many of the programs from which professionals in the business sector would benefit are difficult for departments to mount because they frequently fall outside of traditional curricula offerings. The time factor for program implementation is also very often critical to a corporation. As a result, departments must be in a position to develop curricula and provide instruction where and when the need arises. It is often desirable to conduct a program or course on-site, requiring further special arrangements. Apart from these considerations, marketing existing programs and responding to the immediate requests of businesses with new programs require a considerable amount of financial and personnel resources, neither of which is abundant in departmental structures.

With these concerns in mind, College officials established the CBI. The Center is housed at the College's Mitchell Wolfson Campus primarily because the Campus is located in the heart of the Miami business district. The CBI is designed to provide comprehensive programs and services that not only encompass current College offerings, but also range far beyond them in scope. The CBI has a College-wide charter with no geographical boundaries. This is essential to the function of the Center because currently, all four campuses are restricted to offering courses or on-site programs within these boundaries.

The organization of the Center for Business and Industry is summarized on Table 1.

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Table I

Center for Business and Industry: Organizational Chart

WOLFSON CAMPUS
VICE PRESIDENT

DEAN OF INSTRUCTION

SECRETARY (2)

CBI EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DIRECTOR OF TRAINING	DIRECTOR OF CONFERENCES	MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT

CBI INSTITUTES

- ACCOUNTING
- ARCHITECTURE & ENGINEERING
- BANKING & FINANCE
- COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY
- CORPORATE FITNESS
- FOREIGN TRADE
- HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT
- INSURANCE
- INTERNATIONAL/ INTERCULTURAL AFFAIRS
- LANGUAGE COMMUNICATION
- LEGAL
- MANAGEMENT & SUPERVISORY
- MARKETING & SALES
- OFFICE TECHNOLOGY
- SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY
- SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Source: Miami-Dade Community College Institutional Self-Study (1984).

The Executive Director supervises a total of five staff members: the Director of Training, the Director of Conferences, the Management Consultant and two secretaries. These six staff positions are funded by the College, and the CBI has no enrollment goal. The Director of Training is responsible for developing and implementing corporate on-site programs as well as Campus course offerings in areas of interest to the business community. The primary responsibilities of the Director of Conferences include coordinating and implementing forums, conferences and specialized training seminars for business and industry. The Management Consultant is responsible for developing curricula and delivering management and computer programs. In addition to these staff members, the Executive Director supervises a series of sixteen institutes. Campus faculty members function through these institutes as liaisons between the CBI and various Campus departments. The CBI is an affiliate member of the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce and has a Board of Advisors composed of corporate leaders who provide guidance for the continuing development of the CBI. A summary of the Campus institutes appears on Table 2.

Table 2

Center for Business and Industry: Institutes

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* ACCOUNTING INSTITUTE: Focuses on basic and advanced accounting courses. Programs for continuing professional education for Certified Public Accountants are planned.

* ARCHITECTURE AND ENGINEERING INSTITUTE: Offers courses in interior design, computer-assisted design and drafting (CADD). A robotics program and a computer manufacturing program are planned.

* BANKING AND FINANCE INSTITUTE: Offers a banking program under the sponsorship of the American Institute of Banking (AIB) for members of AIB, the American Bankers Association, and employees of Dade County banks. Offers a savings and loan program in cooperation with the Institute of Financial Education (IFE) for employees of savings and loan associations.

* COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY INSTITUTE: Provides training for mid and upper level management regarding: 1) computer hardware/software equipment available for business and personal use; 2) use of microcomputers, word processors, spread sheets, and electronic mail; 3) current and future impact of computers in daily management operations and decision-making.

* CORPORATE FITNESS INSTITUTE: Provides a fitness program for executives to reduce stress, job absenteeism, and to increase physical energy. Assesses each individual's level of fitness, develops a plan to meet each individual's specific fitness needs, and provides aerobic and weight-training exercises.

* FOREIGN TRADE INSTITUTE: Assists those currently working in the field of foreign trade or those who wish to enter this field. Training topics include: international business, export/import marketing, international exchange rates and regulations, and foreign tariffs.

* HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE: Trains individuals wishing to acquire or update skills in hotel management. Training topics include: management policies and procedures, front desk procedures, accounting, lodging systems, housekeeping control, sanitation, and courtesy training.

* INSURANCE INSTITUTE: Focuses on two certificate tracks for insurance professions leading to life/health certification and general lines agent/property and casualty certification.

* INTERNATIONAL/INTERCULTURAL INSTITUTE: Provides special seminars and conferences for those who plan to conduct business abroad or who wish to develop an international clientele.

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Table 2 Cont.

* LANGUAGE COMMUNICATION INSTITUTE: Provides instruction to improve the language skills of office personnel in the areas of business letter writing, oral and written reports, telephone courtesy, and other skills required for effective communication with the public and internally. Additionally, English, Spanish, French, Italian, German and Portuguese are taught with emphasis on conversation and written discourse in the business environment. Additional courses and language programs in specific professional areas are planned.

* LEGAL INSTITUTE: Provides training for legal assistants on the fundamentals of law, legal writing, trial practice, real estate, legal processes, will / trust / estate creation and administration, and law office management. Offers conferences and seminars for lawyers on topics of interest to the profession.

* MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISORY INSTITUTE: Focuses on upgrading the managerial skills of mid to upper level management in order to increase the productivity of organizations.

* MARKETING AND SALES INSTITUTE: Provides training to improve marketing and sales techniques.

* OFFICE TECHNOLOGY INSTITUTE: Updates secretarial skills in the areas of secretarial procedures, typing,word processing applications, machine transcribing, business writing, and office simulation and systems.

* SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY INSTITUTE: Focuses on science and medical/health care. Provides training in health and medical related procedures and systems.

* SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE: Provides seminars and short courses for those who own or plan to own a small business. Also focuses on business operations and business management practices. Instruction ranges from bookkeeping methods to bidding procedures, marketing strategies and vendor contracts.

Source: Miami-Dade Community College, Center for Business and Industry (1985).

Services and programs provided by the CBI and the Campus institutes include training in management and supervision, computers, banking and finance, foreign languages, foreign trade, corporate fitness, hospitality management, insurance, international and intercultural affairs, architecture and engineering, accounting, legal areas, transcultural communication, marketing and sales, health care, and small business development. In addition to program offerings provided on a per-course basis, the CBI also conducts professional seminars, conferences and workshops in cooperation with various professional associations. The Center for Business and Industry serves small and large businesses and industries, banking institutions, communications firms, hotels and restaurants, and many other clients in the business sector. A summary of programs offered and clients served by the Center for Business and Industry is contained in Table 3.

Table 3

Center for Business and Industry: Clients/Programs
August 1983-February 1985

CLIENT	PROGRAM/SERVICE DELIVERED
Barnett Bank	English for Bank Employees Conversational ESL
City of Miami Beach	Building a Productive Work Unit
Dade County Corrections and Rehabilitation Department	Lotus 1,2,3
Dade County Mental Health Association	EAP Conference
Department of Offstreet Parking	Leadership Training Motivation Training Problem-Solving Managing Change Managing Conflict Clarifying Roles and Expectations Delegation Improving Employee Performance Conversational ESL
Federal Reserve Bank	Women in Management
Florida Exporters and Importers Association	Export Order Administration Drawback: Duty Refunds and Exports Export Documentation Improvement Import Shipments and Documentation
Florida International Bankers Association; International Banking Operations Association; Bank Administration Institute	Conference: Documentary Credit Operations
Jackson Memorial Hospital	Performance Appraisal
Mercy Hospital	Stress Management Motivation Training Improving Employee Performance Coping with Change Basic Spanish for Allied Health Personnel Intermediate Spanish for Allied Health Personnel

Table 3 Cont.

Center for Business and Industry: Clients/Programs

CLIENT	PROGRAM/SERVICE DELIVERED
Mercy Hospital	Women in Management Managing Time Delegating Conference: Miami: Health Care in a Multi-Cultural Environment
Metro-Dade Institute for Professional Development	Secretarial Skills Workshops
Miami Chapter of Life Underwriters	Financial Services Pensions and Retirement Planning Wealth Accumulation
Parkway General Hospital	Business Writing
Partners for International Education and Training	Intensive Hospitality Management Intensive Management and Financial Program
Racal-Milgo	ESL Conversation for the Job Conversational ESL
Roma Corporation	NIFI Sanitation
Southeast Bank	English for Bank Employees
Spillis, Candela and Partners	CADD (3 Workshops)
State of Florida Department of Transportation	Introduction to Microcomputers Introduction to Engineering (2 Courses)
Sun Bank of Miami	Basic Business Spanish Intermediate Business Spanish Conversational Spanish
U.S. Army Recruiting and Department of Housing and Urban Development	Team Building Career Goal Setting

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Table 3 Cont.

Center for Business and Industry: Clients/Programs

CLIENT	PROGRAM/SERVICE DELIVERED
On Campus (Business Executives)	Forum: John Naisbitt, author of Megatrends
On Campus (Business Executives)	Forum: Thomas Peters, author of In Search of Excellence
On Campus (International Accountants)	Conference: The Latest Trends in the Field of Accounting
On Campus (International Architects)	Conference: The Latest Trends in the Field of Architecture Computer Applications Workshop for Architects (CADD)
On Campus (Professionals and Interested Public)	Management Training Programs Leading Motivating Problem-Solving Managing Change Clarifying Roles and Expectations Delegating Performance Appraisal Improving Employee Performance Managing Time Managing Conflict Managing Stress Conducting Meetings New Computer Literacy Introducing Visicalc for Microcomputers Indroducing Wordstar Introducing Lotus 1,2,3 Introducing Basic for Microcomputers Selecting a Personal Computer General Lines Agent Personnel Training Programs Personnel Function Skills Communicating Up and Down Running Meetings

Source: Miami-Dade Community College, Center for Business and Industry (1985).

At first glance it would appear that the CBI is in direct competition with existing Campus deparments by organizing and conducting courses and programs that departments might or should pursue. However, the CBI functions primarily as a liaison between or as a broker for Campus departments and area businesses. When a department member makes a chance contact with or is approached by a client wishing training that falls outside of current offerings, schedule formats or locations on the Campus, the request is referred to the CBI. The CBI personnel negotiate the contract with the client, develop the curriculum with the assistance of departmental faculty in the area of expertise desired, and then hire a faculty member from the department to teach the course. The department that is providing the instruction receives the full-time equivalent enrollments for the course or program offering. If the training request falls outside of the expertise or resources of on-Campus personnel, the Center for Business and Industry then hires outside consultants to develop and deliver the course or program. In this case, the full-time equivalent enrollments still revert to the credit or non-credit departments which provide occupational training, rather than to the CBI.

Specifically in the areas of foreign language training and communication, the CBI has conducted transcultural training programs for area businesses and health care organizations. Language offerings have included conversational and business Spanish and English as a second language for a variety of clients that encompass several large banks, communications industries, public works agencies, health care agencies and hospitals. Many of the international seminars are offered in Spanish or bilingually.

Future plans for programs offered by the Center for Business and Industry call for expansion of services to the Caribbean Basin. Extensive development of foreign language offerings, as well as other skill enhancement programs, is expected. Delivery of such programs would be in a Caribbean Basin country or

would be accomplished through international conferences or seminars sponsored by the CBI in Miami. Miami's proximity to Caribbean nations, as well as its reputation as an international center for business, makes possible the development of a host of educational and training programs that would benefit professionals working in these countries. Expansion to the Caribbean Basin would further strengthen ties between education and international business.

It is clear that survival in today's complex economic environment, on the part of business as well as education, is contingent upon both interests identifying and responding effectively to current trends in the marketplace. It is becoming increasingly more difficult for the academic and private sectors to function independently, and many institutions have become aware of, and have acted upon the need for both groups to join forces in order to adequately serve all sectors of the population: private, academic and public. It was specifically in recognition of this need that Miami-Dade Community College has established the Center for Business and Industry. Since its inception in 1983, the Center has been very successful in creating a productive partnership between business and education in South Florida, and future plans entail working toward the same cooperative effort on an international scale.

Works Cited

Huddleston, Kenneth and Dorothy Fenwick. "The Productivity Challenge: Business Education Partnerships." Training and Development Journal 37.4 (1983): 96-100.

Suggested Resources

Maureen O'Hara, Executive Director
The Center for Business and Industry
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Business Assistance and Entrepreneurship Education Across League Colleges
A Resource Inventory and Directory: 1984-1985
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